

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Canceled)

2. (Currently Amended) A coin-shaped IC card reader/writer which performs processing of reading data from a coin-shaped IC card and writing data to the coin-shaped IC card while the coin-shaped IC card is rolling along and passing through an interior of a coin-shaped IC card guide path, comprising:

coin-shaped IC card distributing means in the coin-shaped IC card guide path, for performing the processing of reading data from the coin-shaped IC card and writing data to the coin-shaped IC card while temporarily stopping the rolling movement of the coin-shaped IC card, and based on results of the processing, distributing the coin-shaped IC card to another coin-shaped IC card guide path disposed separately from the first-mentioned coin-shaped IC card guide path, wherein the coin-shaped IC card distributing means comprise:

a shaft rotatably supported at one end of the first-mentioned coin-shaped IC card guide path, the shaft being adapted to form one side of side walls of the coin-shaped IC card guide path;

a partition plate formed at around a peripheral edge of a leading end surface of the shaft and protruding from the leading end surface, for retaining the coin-shaped IC card at a position opposite a central portion of the shaft and for opening and closing an upstream end of said another coin-shaped IC card guide, in conjunction with turning of the shaft; and

a drive unit for driving the shaft;

an antenna coil opposite the coin-shaped IC card retained by the partition plate and the central portion of the shaft, through which data is read from and written into the retained coin-shaped IC card; and

wherein the shaft is rotated while the coin-shaped IC card is maintained opposite to the central portion of the shaft.

3. (Currently Amended) A coin-shaped IC card reader/writer which performs processing of reading data from a coin-shaped IC card and writing data to the coin-shaped IC card while the coin-shaped IC card is rolling along and passing through an interior of a coin-shaped IC card guide path, comprising:

coin-shaped IC card distributing means in the coin-shaped IC card guide path, for performing the processing of reading data from the coin-shaped IC card and writing data to the coin-shaped IC card while temporarily stopping the rolling movement of the coin-shaped IC card, and based on results of the processing, distributing the coin-shaped IC card to another coin-shaped IC card guide path disposed separately from the first-mentioned coin-shaped IC card guide path, wherein the coin-shaped IC card distributing means comprise:

a distributing lever at one end of the first mentioned coin-shaped IC card guide path supported so as to be rotatable in a direction at right angles to a direction of advance of the first-mentioned coin-shaped IC card guide path, and comprises a pair of guide plates being arranged with a predetermined distance therebetween so as to form a gap of a predetermined width for inserting the coin-shaped IC card therein;

a wall body that temporarily stops the coin-shaped IC card passing through the interior of the first-mentioned coin-shaped IC card guide path in a condition where the coin-shaped IC card is inserted into the gap of the distributing lever; and

drive means consisting of a single drive unit for driving the distributing lever.

4. (Currently Amended) The coin-shaped IC card reader/writer according to claim 3, wherein inner circumferential surfaces of the guide plates are formed in curved surface shapes.

5. (Currently Amended) The coin-shaped IC card reader/writer according to claim 4, further comprising a ~~turning~~ rotating position detection sensor provided at a position adjacent to the distributing lever, for detecting rotating position of the distributing lever.

6. (Previously Amended) The coin-shaped IC card reader/writer according to claim 2, wherein said another coin-shaped IC card guide paths comprises a coin-shaped IC card collection path for collecting the coin-shaped IC card and a coin-shaped IC card return path for returning the coin-shaped IC card.
7. (Previously Amended) The coin-shaped IC card reader/writer according to claim 2, further comprising coin diameter detection means provided at a card deposit slot formed at a starting end of the first-mentioned coin-shaped IC card guide path, for detecting whether or not a diameter of a coin shaped object deposited in a card deposit slot has a specific size.
8. (Previously Amended) The coin-shaped IC card reader/writer according to claim 6, further comprising a positioning ring provided at a terminal end of the coin-shaped IC card return path, for positioning and supporting the coin shaped object guided through the IC card return path.
9. (Previously Amended) The coin-shaped IC card reader/writer according to claim 7, further comprising a shutter provided in the first-mentioned coin-shaped IC card guide path, for opening and closing the first-mentioned coin-shaped IC card guide path based on detection signals of the coin diameter detection means.
10. (Previously Amended) The coin-shaped IC card reader/writer according to claim 3, wherein said another coin-shaped IC card guide paths comprises a coin-shaped IC card collection path for collecting the coin-shaped IC card and a coin-shaped IC card return path for returning the coin-shaped IC card.
11. (Previously Amended) The coin-shaped IC card reader/writer according to claim 3, further comprising coin diameter detection means provided at a card deposit slot formed at a starting end of the first-mentioned coin-shaped IC card guide path, for detecting whether or not a diameter of a coin shaped object deposited in a card deposit slot has a specific size.

12. (New) A coin-shaped IC card reader/writer which performs processing of reading data from a coin-shaped IC card and writing data to the coin-shaped IC card while the coin-shaped IC card is rolling along and passing through an interior of a coin-shaped IC card guide path, comprising:

coin-shaped IC card distributing means in the coin-shaped IC card guide path, for performing the processing of reading data from the coin-shaped IC card and writing data to the coin-shaped IC card while temporarily stopping the rolling movement of the coin-shaped IC card, and, based on results of the processing, distributing the coin-shaped IC card to either one of another two coin-shaped IC card guide paths branched from the first-mentioned coin-shaped IC card guide path, the branched another two coin-shaped IC card guide paths being arranged to be mutually offset from a centerline formed by the first mentioned coin-shaped IC card guide path, wherein the coin-shaped IC card distributing means comprise:

a shaft suspended in a longitudinal direction of the first-mentioned coin-type IC card guide path so as to be freely rotatable at a branch end of the first-mentioned coin-type IC card guide path;

a distributing lever comprising a pair of guide paths arranged along the longitudinal direction of the first-mentioned coin-type IC card guide path with a gap of a predetermined width formed therebetween, the distributing lever being secured to the shaft and rotatably supported along the longitudinal direction of the first-mentioned coin-type IC card guide path;

a wall body that temporarily stops the coin-shaped IC card in a condition where the coin-shaped IC card is inserted into the gap between the pair of the guide plates; and

drive means consisting of a single drive unit, for rotating the distributing lever about the shaft in a direction at right angles to a direction of advance of the first-mentioned coin-shaped IC card guide path,

whereby the distributing lever distributes by the rotation thereof the temporarily stopped coin-shaped IC card to one of the another two coin-shaped IC card guide paths.